



Sympathetic Vibratory Physics

The Music of the Spheres

Mary Proctor

“My system, in every part and detail, both in the developing of this power and in every branch of its utilization, is based and founded on *sympathetic vibration*. In no other way would it be possible to awaken or develop this force, and equally impossible would it be to operate my engine upon any other principle.”

John Keely, 1888

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THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.

By MARY PROCTOR.

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man." Dryden.

Amid the busy hum of life, let us pause awhile to note the grand harmony of nature's choir; the deep anthem of the mighty ocean, the soft whisperings of the leaves on the trees, or the plaintive rustle of the dead leaves at our feet. Listen to the joyful carol of the birds, the ripple of the waves, the thunder of the tempest, and the vesper hymn of the evening breeze, and do we not exclaim with Watts:

"Strange! that a harp of a thousand strings,
Should keep so long in tune."

With regard to the music of the spheres, Pythagoras, and some of his earliest disciples, taught that the stars and planets, during their revolutions, omitted musical sounds of various intensities, according to their distances from the earth, all of which, however, were supposed to be inaudible to men. The following is the account given of the supposed discovery of the harmonic numbers:

"It is stated that when passing near a forge one day, Pythagoras noticed that the hammers gave out very accurate musical concords. He had them weighed, and found that of those which sounded the octave, one weighed twice as much as the other; of those which made a perfect fifth, one weighed one-third more than the other, and in the case of a fourth, one-quarter more. After having tried the hammers, he took a string stretched with weights, and found that when he had applied a given weight in the first instance to make any particular note, he had to double the weight to obtain the octave, to add one-third extra only to obtain a fifth, a quarter for the fourth, an eighth for one tone, and about an eighteenth for a half-tone. More simply still, he stretched a cord, and then when the whole length sounded any note, when stopped in the middle it gave the octave, at the third it gave the fifth, at the quarter the fourth, at the eighth the tone, and at the eighteenth the semi-tone."

According to Plutarch, the interval from the earth to the fixed stars was considered the diapason, or extent of seven tones, and the distances of the seven planets, including the sun and moon, from each other, were expressed by tones and semi-tones in different proportions.

"The sphere of the stars was the common envelope or circumference of the universe, and Saturn, immediately below it, corresponded to the thirty-sixth tone and the earth to the first, and the other planets with the sun and moon at the various harmonic distances. One tone was reckoned from the earth to the moon, half a tone from the moon to Mercury, another half-tone to Venus, one tone and a half from Venus to the sun, one from the sun to Mars, a semi-tone from Mars to Jupiter, half a tone from Jupiter to Saturn, and a tone and a half from Saturn to the fixed stars, but these distances were not universally agreed upon." ("Astronomical Myths," p. 167. Flammarion.)

"There can be very little doubt, however, that by the harmony of the spheres, these philosophers only meant to illustrate the order supposed to prevail throughout the universe as known to them. Dr. Gregory infers from this idea a proof that they were acquainted with the Newtonian law of the decrease of gravity, and he believes that these philosophers have veiled their doctrines under an allegory when they assert that Apollo touched a seven-stringed lyre, which he supposed represents the sun and the seven planets. According to Macrobius, the sun retained the planets in their

orbits by attractive forces in harmonic proportion. Because the tones obtained from cords equally thick but of different lengths are invariably proportional to the square of the lengths of the cords, he inferred that the harmonic proportion alluded to in the attractive forces was the inverse duplicate of the distances of the planet from the sun. Nevertheless, few persons will, we imagine, be inclined to believe that the doctrine of Pythagoras, or of any of his disciples, lay as deep as is here supposed!" ("Origin of Astronomy," by John Narrien, F. B. A. S., p. 166.)

Ocellus, Democritus, Aristotle and Lucretius, and all the best minds in Greece and Italy, both poets and philosophers, were imbued with the idea of the celestial harmony, and have left treatises on this subject, and almost all with the same title: "The Nature of the Universe." Plato, in his *Republic*, teaches that there is actual musical harmony between the planets. "Each of the spheres," he said, "carried with it a Siren, and each of these sounding a different note, formed by their union a perfect concert, and being, themselves delighted with their own harmony, they sang divine songs, accompanying them with a sacred dance." He also believed that there were nine Muses, eight of whom presided over celestial, and the ninth over terrestrial things, thus protecting them from disorder and irregularity. Cicero and Macrobius also expressed opinions with regard to this celestial concert. "Such great motions," wrote Cicero, "cannot take place in silence, and it is natural that the two extremes should have related sounds as in the octave. The fixed stars must execute the treble, and the moon the bass." Kepler improved on this, saying that Jupiter and Saturn sang bass, Mars takes the tenor, the Earth and Venus are contralto and Mercury is soprano. True, no one has ever heard these sounds, but Pythagoras could have answered such an objection as follows, when he said: "We are always surrounded by this melody, and our ears are accustomed to it from our birth, so that, having nothing different to compare it with, we cannot perceive it."

"There's not the smallest orb, that thou beholdest,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim;
Such harmony is in immortal soul;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

The doctrine of celestial harmony, by which was meant the music of the spheres, was common to all the nations of the East. To this divine music Euripedes alluded in the following words: "Thee I invoke, thou self-created Being, who gavest birth to nature, and whom light and darkness, and the whole train of globes encircle with eternal music." Schubert, in his *Symbolism of Dreams*, has the following passage relative to music: "It may be asked whether that language which now occupies so low a place in the estimation of man, be not the actual making of the higher regions, while we, awake, as we fancy ourselves, may be sunk in a sleep of many thousand years, or, at least, in the echo of their dreams, and only intelligibly catch a few dim words of that language of God, as sleepers do scattered expressions from the loud conversations of those around them."

The Rosicrucians' theories, with regard to the music of the spheres, are ably described in Hargrave Jennings' book, upon their rites and mysteries. They view the whole world as a musical instrument; that is, a chromatic, sensible instrument. "The common axis or pole of the world celestial is intersected—where this superior diapason, or heavenly chord, is divided—by the spiritual sun or centre of sentience. Every man has a little spark (sun) in himself. Time is only protracted consciousness. Earthly music is the faintest tradition of the angelic state; it remains in the mind of man, as the dream and regret for the 'Lost Paradise.' Music is yet master of man's emotions, and, therefore, of man. Heavenly music is produced from impact upon the paths of the planets, which stand as chords or strings, by the cross-travel of the sun from note to note, as from planet to planet, and earthly music is but a faint reproduction of the same, and 'a relic of heaven.'" The Rosicrucians taught that the "music of the spheres" is true, and not merely a poetic dream, "all nature, like a piece of music, being produced by melodious combinations of the cross movement

of the holy light playing over the orbits of the planets; light flaming as the spiritual ecliptic, or the *gladius* of the Archangel Michael, to the extremities of the solar system." They contended that music, or melody—which is enchantment—pervades all nature in its prosperous or intended progress, although it is only the wail or plaint of the soul, mourning for the "Lost Paradise." Music is the atmosphere of the spirits, the communication from the invisible spirits that people the air in greater or lesser number.

The Cabalists imagined that the arrangement of the stars in the sky, and the varying speed of the planets of the solar system, produced harmonious sounds. They taught that God "made the world" by the "means of music;" that music, as man knows music, is essentially a power; that (through it originally) everything was possible, as the gift of God; which explains the classic fables of Orpheus, Amphion, and the mythological wonder-workers in music. They believed that music is modulated in the movements of the planets, and that the human soul is so debased that it only catches intermittently the faint echo of the continuous universal music, which is the life and growth and splendor of everything. Music is magic, is sacred and a power—as all harmony must be. Music is always in the air, more particularly at night, for nature is necessarily more nervously sensitive at night, because more fascinating and mysterious. The Great Soul of the World, moving in the arc of the mighty pendulum between the two points, Life and Death, is continually urging its way toward "Rest." ("The Rosicrucians; their Rites and Mysteries." Hargrave Jennings, P. 245.)

Although we enjoy these quaint legends of the music of the spheres, which appeal to our imagination, yet the truths revealed by science appeal to us even more strongly. The master mind of Kepler evolved beauty and order out of the chaos of motion which had hitherto distinguished the stars of heaven. He discovered and rejoiced in the "harmonies of the planets," about which he wrote in his enthusiasm: "Nothing holds me; I will indulge my sacred fury; I will triumph over mankind, for I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians." Yet it would doubtless have seemed a strange thing to him, had he known that he had only heard a few stray notes of the music of the spheres, that he had not yet—as he had hoped

"Come on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,
Æonian music measuring out,
The steps of Time."

Modern investigation has led us still further, and peering into the depths of space with the photographic eyes of science, we are enabled to roam from star to star, from sun to system, from system to universe, ever seeking that point from whence these millions of circling suns shall reveal the perpetual harmony which doubtless reigns throughout the universe of God, of which Goethe sung:

"See all things with each other blending,
Each to all its being lending,
Each on all in turn depending,
Heavenly ministers descending,
And again to Heaven uptending,
Floating, mingling, interweaving,
Rising, sinking, and receiving
Each from each, while each is giving
On to each, and each relieving
Each—the pails of gold. The living
Current through the air is heaving;
Breathing blessings see them bending,
Balanced worlds from change defending,
While everywhere diffused is harmony unending."